

**RULES
OF
TENNESSEE STUDENT ASSISTANCE CORPORATION**

**CHAPTER 1640-01-09
NED MCWHERTER SCHOLARS PROGRAM**

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1640-01-09-.01 SUMMARY AND PURPOSE.

- (1) The State of Tennessee has created an Academic Scholars Program to be administered by the Tennessee Student Assistance Corporation (TSAC) for qualified applicants to attend postsecondary institutions in Tennessee in pursuit of an associate or baccalaureate degree. The scholarship will be awarded to assist in the cost of required tuition, fees, equipment, textbooks, supplies, and if applicable, room and board at the institution. The amount of the award shall be determined by the TSAC Board of Directors based on available State funding. The amount paid by TSAC from the program's endowment and appropriations must be matched on a dollar-for-dollar basis for each awardee by the respective institution the awardee attends. The scholarship is intended to provide an incentive for academically superior Tennessee students to attend a postsecondary education institution in Tennessee, and is payable for up to four academic years for recipients who continue to be qualified.

Authority: T.C.A. §§ 49-4-201, 49-4-203, and 49-4-204. **Administrative History:** Original rule filed April 10, 1986; effective July 14, 1986. Amendment filed May 7, 1991; effective August 28, 1991. Amendments filed February 13, 2017; effective May 14, 2017.

1640-01-09-.02 MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS OF APPLICANTS.

- (1) To be eligible, an applicant must:
 - (a) Have earned a minimum cumulative grade point average in high school, at the end of the seventh semester, of at least 3.5 on a 4.0 scale. The seventh semester is usually the semester before the semester in which one would graduate.
 - (b) Have attained a composite score on the ACT or the SAT which places the student in the top five percent of test-takers nationally, such minimum score to be estimated based upon previous year's data and announced annually.
 - (c) Have graduated with a regular diploma from a high school in Tennessee that is approved by the Tennessee State Department of Education, is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, or belongs to an agency whose accreditation process is approved by the State Board of Education. Exceptions to this requirement for graduates of a "home school" as defined in T.C.A. § 49-6-3050 may be granted by the Executive Director of TSAC.
 - (d) Be an applicant for initial admission to college after high school graduation at the time of the student's initial application for the scholarship. The applicant must enroll at an eligible postsecondary institution within sixteen (16) months following graduation from high school.

(Rule 1640-01-09-.02, continued)

- (e) Be a Tennessee resident, as defined by rules promulgated by the Board of Regents.
- (f) Be a citizen, permanent resident or eligible non-citizen of the United States.
- (g) Make application to TSAC for the scholarship by established deadlines on TSAC-approved application forms.
- (h) Request a copy of the high school transcript be mailed or emailed to TSAC by the high school from which the applicant graduated, or upon the applicant's graduation, as applicable. If the ACT and/or SAT scores have not previously been provided to TSAC, ensure at least one of these scores is sent to TSAC by the established deadline.

Authority: T.C.A. §§ 49-4-201, 49-4-203, and 49-4-204. **Administrative History:** Original rule filed April 10, 1986; effective July 14, 1986. Amendment filed February 17, 1988; effective May 29, 1988. Amendments filed February 13, 2017; effective May 14, 2017.

1640-01-09-.03 QUALIFYING PROGRAMS AND INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION.

- (1) The institution to be attended must be located in Tennessee and be approved by the Tennessee Higher Education Commission (THEC) or accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools to award academic associate or undergraduate degrees.
- (2) The postsecondary educational institution that the recipient will attend must agree in writing to TSAC to provide the administrative and academic information necessary to administer the program. The institution must also agree in writing to match the endowment portion of the scholarship award on a dollar-for-dollar basis. The portion of the scholarship matched by the postsecondary institution must not include a work or service requirement.
- (3) The program entered must lead to an associate or baccalaureate degree.

Authority: T.C.A. §§ 49-4-201, 49-4-203, and 49-4-204. **Administrative History:** Original rule filed April 10, 1986; effective July 14, 1986. Amendments filed February 13, 2017; effective May 14, 2017.

1640-01-09-.04 SCHOLARSHIP AMOUNT, LENGTH, AND INTERVALS OF PAYMENTS.

- (1) The amount of the award shall be determined by the TSAC Board of Directors and published on TSAC's website.
- (2) If the scholarship recipient also receives federal and/or state educational assistance for the same award period(s), the total scholarship and other aid may not exceed the cost of attendance.
- (3) The recipient must attend on a full-time basis in courses that are creditable toward the recipient's graduation requirements during the time for which the recipient receives the scholarship, as determined by the written policies of the institution attended. At least two semesters of attendance, or the equivalent, is required each year to remain eligible. The cost for summer enrollment periods will not be covered by the scholarship.
- (4) Recipients must achieve at least a 3.0 cumulative grade point average (GPA) each academic year to remain eligible.
 - (a) If a student ceases to be eligible for the Ned McWherter Scholars award due to failure to achieve the required cumulative GPA at the end of an academic year, the student

(Rule 1640-01-09-.04, continued)

may regain the award by maintaining continuous, full-time enrollment at an eligible postsecondary institution and attaining a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher. Eligibility shall be reviewed at the end of each academic year following the loss of the award. The student may regain the award one time. A student who subsequently loses the award after regaining eligibility shall be permanently ineligible.

- (5) Recipients in a baccalaureate degree program are eligible for the scholarship for up to eight semesters or twelve quarters. Recipients in an associate degree program are eligible for up to four semesters or six quarters.
- (6) Scholarship recipients must use the Ned McWherter Scholars award for education-related expenses. Ned McWherter Scholars awards shall be first applied to tuition and fees, room and board, and the excess, if any, shall be distributed to the recipient provided the student remains eligible according to subsections (3) and (4) of this rule. The funds will be sent by direct deposit to the school and the school will disburse the funds to the recipient. At institutions utilizing the quarter system, one-third of the annual award will be paid at the start of the fall, winter, and spring quarters. At semester institutions, one-half of the annual award will be paid at the start of the fall and spring terms.

Authority: T.C.A. §§ 49-4-201, 49-4-203, 49-4-204, and 49-4-209. **Administrative History:** Original rule filed April 10, 1986; effective July 14, 1986. Amendment filed May 7, 1991; effective August 28, 1991. Amendment filed January 29, 1993; effective April 30, 1993. Amendment filed April 2, 1996; effective August 28, 1996. Amendment filed August 6, 2002; effective December 27, 2002. Amendments filed February 13, 2017; effective May 14, 2017.

1640-01-09-.05 APPLICATION AND INITIAL AWARD PROCEDURES.

- (1) By February 15, each applicant shall:
 - (a) Submit an application to TSAC; and
 - (b) Ensure a copy of the applicant's high school transcript that contains the high school grades through the seventh semester is submitted by the high school to TSAC.
- (2) Recipients for freshmen awards will be selected by the following criteria:
 - (a) The applicant must meet the minimum standards described in Rule 1640-01-09-.02.
 - (b) The ACT and/or SAT score, including past scores of each test, the high school grades attained in each course, and the difficulty of the high school program taken will be compared to those of other applicants.
 - (c) Other relevant factors will be considered that tend to indicate the success the applicant may have in the program and the applicant's future contributions to society. The awards will be made with due regard for broad participation by recipients from across the state who are representative of various ethnic and racial characteristics and by members of each sex.
- (3) Recipients will be recommended by a four-person committee chaired and appointed by the Executive Director of THEC / TSAC. The Executive Director of THEC / TSAC, or designee, shall serve on the committee. Other members shall include one representative each of public four-year institutions, private four-year institutions, and community colleges. The selection of these three representatives shall provide for rotation among eligible institutions, according to procedures established by the Executive Director of THEC / TSAC.

(Rule 1640-01-09-.05, continued)

- (4) During the spring semester of the high school senior year, TSAC will notify applicants of their award status. Those who are notified that they are tentative awardees will have two weeks from the notification date to notify TSAC that they will accept the award or the award will be forfeited.
- (5) The number of recipients selected for awards in any one year will be determined by the availability of funds for that year.
- (6) The institution shall ensure that the recipient is enrolled full-time for the period for which the award is given and, after the initial term of enrollment, that the recipient has maintained satisfactory progress in accordance with standards described in Rule 1640-01-09-.04(4) for the immediately preceding academic term attended by the recipient prior to releasing scholarship funds to the recipient. The electronic certification shall be completed by the institution each term of the award year.
- (7) If the deadline under this section occurs on a weekend or holiday, the deadline will be the next business day.

Authority: T.C.A. §§ 49-4-201, 49-4-203, and 49-4-204. **Administrative History:** Original rule filed April 10, 1986; effective July 14, 1986. Amendment filed February 17, 1988; effective May 29, 1988. Amendment filed January 29, 1993; effective April 30, 1993. Amendments filed February 13, 2017; effective May 14, 2017.

1640-01-09-.06 RENEWAL SCHOLARSHIPS.

- (1) Scholarship awards are made to recipients for one year at a time. After the initial application, renewal applications must be submitted each year to continue in the program.
- (2) Renewal recipients shall receive first priority for scholarship awards, assuming sufficient funding.
- (3) Scholarships will be continued for recipients who continue to meet Rule 1640-01-09-.02 standards and maintain satisfactory progress in accordance with the standards described in Rule 1640-01-09-.04(4). Upon proper and timely application, such prior recipients will be eligible for a renewal scholarship each year while enrolled in the program until the recipient has received a maximum total of twelve quarters or eight semesters in a baccalaureate degree program or a maximum of six quarters or four semesters in an associate degree program in awards.
- (4) Students participating in the program may transfer to another eligible institution. This transfer must be noted on the application. A transfer student retains their eligibility provided all other conditions are met. Recipients completing an associate degree may transfer to a four year institution to pursue a baccalaureate degree.
- (5) Renewal applications, as approved by TSAC, must be submitted by February 15 that immediately precedes the year for which the scholarship is sought. If the deadline occurs on a weekend or holiday, the application deadline will be the next business day.
- (6) All renewal awards are tentative until confirmation is received by TSAC from the educational institution being attended that the student continues to meet the stipulations in subparagraph (3) of this Rule after the spring term.

Authority: T.C.A. §§ 49-4-201, 49-4-203, and 49-4-204. **Administrative History:** Original rule filed April 10, 1986; effective July 14, 1986. Amendment filed May 7, 1991; effective August 28, 1991. Amendment filed January 29, 1993; effective April 30, 1993. Amendments filed February 13, 2017; effective May 14, 2017.

1640-01-09-.07 APPEALS PROCEDURES.

- (1) All student appeals must be submitted to the TSAC Tennessee Education Lottery Scholarship (TELS) Appeals Panel. Except where exigent circumstances exist, the TELS Appeals Panel shall render a decision no later than fourteen (14) calendar days after receipt of the appeal. The ruling of the TELS Appeals Panel shall be the last administrative remedy.
- (2) The TELS Appeals Panel shall have no authority to make an exception to the high school or collegiate GPA requirements.

Authority: T.C.A. §§ 49-4-201, 49-4-203, and 49-4-204. **Administrative History:** Original rule filed April 10, 1986; effective July 14, 1986. Amendments filed February 13, 2017; effective May 14, 2017